

Old Textile Mill and Storage Warehouse
Grahamton, Meade County, Kentucky

HABS No. 20-6

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 20
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
G. M. Grimes, District Officer
304 Martin Brown Building
Louisville, Kentucky

Name of structure: Old Textile Mill and Storage Warehouse

Location: Grahamton, Meade County, Kentucky,
on Otter Creek. U. S. No. 60.

Owner or
custodian: McCord Company

Address: Kenyon Building, Louisville, Kentucky

Date built:
(approx) 1837 Old Mill. 1850-60 Old Warehouse

Architect
or builder:

Present
condition: Excellent

Number of
stories: Three stories; also attic and basement.

Material used
in construction: Foundation: Native stone.
Exterior walls: Native stone, coursed,
random sizes.
Interior partitions: Structural frame
of yellow pine in Mill building.
Building No. 2, now used as ware-
house (originally grist mill), has
solid oak structural columns, beams,
and joists.
Floors: Original replaced (recently) with
seven-eighth-inch, tongue and groove,
yellow pine.
Roof: Sheathing of poplar, covered with
slate shingles.

Description:
architectural
and historical

The following extracts from "Grahamton
and the Early Textile Mills of Kentucky",
by Dr. Wm. Allen Pusey, a paper read at
The Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky,
April 6, 1931:

"The mill and business that became the Grahamton Manufacturing Company was established in Louisville in 1829 by Robert Graham and Mr. Snead. It can fairly claim to have had a continuous existence since 1829, although it was moved to its present site on Otter Creek in Meade County in 1837. It was a complete textile mill from its beginning in Louisville, having not only cards and spindles, but looms and made cloths. It and the Maysville Mills may contend for the honor of being the oldest textile mill in the State, but Grahamton is, as far as I can find, the first complete textile mill in Kentucky, probably the first one west of the mountains, and one of the oldest, if not the oldest, in continuous operation in the country. It is surely the oldest complete textile mill now in existence in the State and furnishes an interesting item in the history of the textile industry. I can find no other mill that was so long in continuous existence in any other part of the United States.

"They shipped the machinery from Louisville to the mouth of Otter Creek. Today one can hardly find a steeper, rougher road than from Grahamton to the mouth of Otter Creek. At the time there was no road, but Graham and Anderson dragged their machinery with oxen up the valley of the creek to the mill site. They built the present stone mill, put the machinery in it, and named the place Grahamton --not Grahampton.

"During the Civil War the mill ran almost continuously, according to Mr. Peak, except for interruptions caused by guerillas. The superintendent at that time was P. Z. Aylesworth, a partner in the company and long the superintendent, a man who had the loyal support of his employees and the confidence of the community, but he was a Rhode Islander, and this fact was used as a pretext by the guerillas for depredations upon the mill. Except for the interruptions caused by these depredations its operation during the Civil War was continuous.

"The original textile mill is the present spinning mill. It is a heavy stone building 60 x 120 feet, originally of two stories and a loft. It was a large mill for the time, almost twice the size of the Maysville Mill (63x 33 feet). It suffered from a damaging fire in 1913, and after that it was increased in height one story and equipped with new machinery, thereby greatly increasing its capacity. Other buildings have been built as accessories to the mill, but except for these conditions the original building has never been enlarged. It is probable that since the original plant at Louisville was a steam plant, this mill, from the beginning, also used steam, as Mr. Charles H. Peak believes, for

auxiliary purposes, but it has always used waterpower, as it does today.

"The first dam and race were made of wood. About eighty years ago these were replaced by the present fine stone dam and mill race. This dam, with buttresses at either end and with its arch facing upstream, old as it is, might have been built yesterday: it is exactly of the same plan as that of the new-type great irrigation dams being built today.

"Grahamton was built in a wilderness--a district that still strikes one as so primitive that the existence of a textile mill there today is a surprise. It is a unique enterprise in that county. Nothing similar exists, or I believe, ever existed anywhere in this part of the State. Its founding is evidence of the enterprise and energy of Robert Graham, and its long persistence is a tribute to the ability of those who have conducted it since his day".

G. M. Grimes

Revised 1936 by H.C.F.